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ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
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FM USEU BRUSSELS  
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INFO RUCNMEU/EU INTEREST COLLECTIVE  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 003417

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DEPT FOR OES  
OES/PDAS FOR RHARNISH  
OES/EGC FOR GTHOMPSON  
OES/ENV FOR LBRUTTEN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [EAID](#) [ENRG](#) [EPET](#) [SENV](#) [EU](#)  
SUBJECT: WIREC 2008: EUROPEAN COMMISSION HAS QUESTIONS,  
NEEDS ANSWERS FOR THIRD COUNTRY TRIP FUNDING

REF: STATE 138428

1. (U) Summary: On November 20, 2007 ESToffs met with DG Environment to discuss preparations for the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC), March 4-6, 2008 in Washington. DG Environment is interested in participating in the EU delegation and queried about the possibility of a formal invitation for Environment Commissioner Dimas, in addition to the one for Energy Commissioner Piebalgs. DG-ENV officials also had a number of questions on the specifics of WIREC, in particular what the policy goal is for WIREC and how the U.S. sees WIREC advancing the policy agenda established in the earlier meetings in Bonn and Beijing. On EU funding for developing countries to attend WIREC, DG-ENV indicated that this may/may still be possible, but the window was closing very fast, given the EU's funding rules. They would need an agenda as quickly as possible and any information which would help justify this expenditure as fitting EU policy goals would be invaluable. End Summary

2. (U) On November 20, 2007, ESToffs met with DG Environment International Relations Division Head of Unit Astrid Schomaker, Energy and Environment Head of Unit Piotr Tulej and Desk Officer Helen McCarthy-O'Kelly to discuss preparations for the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC), March 4-6 in Washington. Schomaker and Tulej will meet with DG Transport and Energy (DG TREN) representatives next week to discuss the EU's WIREC positions. They understood that Energy Commissioner Piebalgs had been invited, and asked if the same invitation would be extended to Environmental Commissioner Dimas, noting that he attended the Beijing International Renewable Energy Conference. March 3 is the Environmental Council meeting and March 4 may be a potential EU-Latin American Environment-Energy Ministerial. Given this, Schomaker and Tulej asked that, if an invitation is to be extended, it be extended quickly and hoped that the Ministerial level meetings would occur towards the end of WIREC, which would make Dimas's participation more likely.

3. (U) Schomaker and Tulej had a number of questions and comments:

-- The WIREC should not only promote business, but move policy forward. The EU sees a number of policy loose ends remaining on renewables. For example, would the renewables commitments mandated in Johannesburg be followed up by international commitments? This was not undertaken in Beijing; would the US be willing to do this?

-- The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) matrix is intended to be a living document, with input from government and industry on best practices. Is the U.S. planning to keep it alive via a revision? Or planning a new document altogether? The EU sees no need for duplicating the CSD process, but is in favor of moving it forward and bringing it back to the forefront.

-- The WIREC agenda appears to place a strong emphasis on biofuels. Is there a specific reason for this, in particular given the International Biofuels Forum and other upcoming biofuels gatherings would allow highlighting of biofuels? What is the value added on biofuels that isn't being addressed in the numerous other biofuel forums?

-- The preparatory process with third countries steering committee: Both the Beijing and Bonn meetings used such a committee, will that be used again?

-- The EU will adopt its Energy and Climate Package on January 23 and therefore may have some insights to bring to WIREC. Tulej wondered if there would be any possibilities for the Commissioner(s) to participate in a side event to highlight EU developments.

-- Schomaker suggested that, as one of WIREC's goals is to exchange policy approaches between government and stakeholders, it might be beneficial to ensure that any roundtables contain a mix of government and industry participants.

¶4. (U) On EU funding for developing countries to attend WIREC, Schomaker indicated that this may/may still be possible, but the window was closing very fast, given the

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EU's funding rules. She would need an agenda as quickly as possible and any information which would help justify this expenditure as fitting EU policy goals would be invaluable. Schomaker further noted that, as DG TREN does not have funding, it would be a bit difficult to spend DG Environment funds without Commissioner Dimas also attending.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Our DG Environment colleagues were friendly, and offered their suggestions/comments clearly as trying to get the tools they needed to secure maximum EU participation in WIREC on a positive note. While we understand delegation size limitations, inviting Dimas would be a very positive step; to ensure that both he and Commissioner Piebalgs remain committed to working with us on renewable energy and alternate fuels and given the EU funding issues, which impact the ability to include developing countries. End Comment.

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